

The Challenge

Sierra Army Depot, Herlong, CA

July 2004

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D.I.C.E. Man Comes To Sierra Army Depot

By Robert Harnden
Training Coordinator

What is the D.I.C.E. man? Well, no, he's not a pit boss at one of the casinos in Reno, nor is he a bookie working for an illegal gambling ring either. The D.I.C.E. (Defensive Information to Counter Espionage) Man is Mr. Ray Semko, a counter-intelligence analyst who works for the Interagency OPSEC (Operations Security) Support Staff. Almost every day of the week, all year long, Mr. Semko is somewhere presenting his unique D.I.C.E. briefing in front of thousands of government employees and corporate business professionals throughout the world!

Ray Semko performed his 90-minute OPSEC briefing for the very first time, live at Sierra Army Depot. One of the crucial points that Mr. Semko spoke about is how we, as depot employees and members of the community, should regard OPSEC as an "*absolute necessity*". We are here to support the war-fighter. Who are the war-fighters? They are our husbands, wives, sons, and daughters enlisted as active duty military members of the armed forces, or working as civilians in a supporting role here in the United States and abroad.

Some other points that Mr. Semko shared with the group were:

- Espionage and terrorism is never going to go away.
- National security has never been more important than it is today.
- America will always have to be on their guard from now on.
- As American citizens, don't live in fear, but protect yourselves from the enemies of America.
- Security may seem expensive and inconvenient, but it is absolutely necessary.
- Scrutinize your web pages, don't post pictures of your family members and their names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc.
- Practice good OPSEC at work and at home.

OPSEC not only refers to safeguarding documents, but automated data processing systems as well. Think about the information you have



Photo by Lynn Goddard

Mr. Ray Semko, D.I.C.E. Man, provided training to Sierra Army Depot employees and members from the 399th Combat Support Hospital during a condensed 90-minute training session about the importance of Operations Security and how it needs to be applied to their daily jobs.

on your computer, whether at work or at home. What would happen to you if someone hacked your pin numbers and passwords to your bank accounts? Hackers everyday attack personal computers as well as corporate and government computers in an aggres-

sive attempt to compromise your identification. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America today. Think of OPSEC as an anti-theft security system, similar to that which you might have on your home. You certainly wouldn't want to give out your

security code to anyone outside of your family members. So be careful of the information you store on your computers, and with whom you share this information with, especially if you or your children spend much time on the Internet! Cyber-terrorism is a brand new type of terrorism, and we don't even know how bad it is going to get.

One of my favorite quotes that was shared with the group is as follows:

"The greatest threat to America today is not Iran, Iraq, North Korea, terrorism, or weapons of mass destruction. It is the potential that we will become too complacent during this time of peace". Gen. Henry Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

I'd like to leave with you a quote made by Madeline Albright, "I don't care how skilled you are as a diplomat, how brilliant you may be at meetings, or how creative you are as an administrator, if you are not professional about security, you are a failure."

Thank you, and have a D.I.C.E. day!



Photo by Lynn Goddard

Vince Sabatino, left, presents the Commander's coin to Mr. Ray Semko after his presentation to employees at Sierra Army Depot on OPSEC.

Commander's View

SAFETY

Safety is more than a word. On the job, safety may be second nature to many. But sometimes familiarity can lead to carelessness. The task that has become so routine can be the one that jumps up and bites you.

By the same token, many of you are either student summer hires or temps/terms just hired to work here for the first time. Not all of you are familiar with the work area. It is important that you always think safety in all that you do.

DEPLOYMENTS

Sierra currently has nine employees deployed in Iraq, along with six employees from our contractor, Lear-Seigler. These individuals along with those, whom recently returned, volunteered to go to Iraq and provide the necessary support to ensure the safety and well being for all Soldiers and civilians. The conditions these individuals have or are currently experiencing are not like our temperatures or even living standards that we take



Vincent Sabatino for granted. We applaud those individuals that are sacrificing their time away from their families to make certain the Soldiers in the field are kept safe so they can come home to their families.

BRAC

Recently there has been talk about delaying the next BRAC for two years. That's all it is at this time. We currently have received three data calls to provide answers to approximately 1150 questions. These questions range from installation capacity to military value. If you are tasked to answer any of these

questions or even provide supporting documentation, take the time to accomplish the task. We want to prove that Sierra Army Depot is a critical installation not only to the Army, but also for all services.

LEAN

The LEAN Team continues to establish lean implementation requirements. To meet this requirement, Sierra Army Depot will need to hold three or four events per month. With this in mind, it is the intent of the Command to have every employee participate in the two different types of events: Value Stream Analysis (VSA) or Rapid Improvement Event (RIE). If you are selected for one of these events, you need to make all efforts to attend.

The Fourth of July holiday is just around the corner and I hope that each of you have a safe and enjoyable holiday. Take time to enjoy a fun filled weekend of barbeques, family activities, and maybe some water events. We'll see you back at work on 6 July!

Sierra Team Pulls Together

On June 23, the Occupational Health Clinic performed physical examinations on more prospective SIAD employees. The positions of General Support Helper and summer hire Laborers have been the focus of physicals for the month of June.

The physical examination is an integral part of in processing new employees and was accomplished in one day for approximately 30 new employees. Team Sierra made this task possible. A combination of clinic medical staff, safety, fire department, industrial arts, CPAC, security and the 48th CSH personnel came together as TEAM Sierra to accomplish this mission.

A special thank you goes out to Manar Sedek-Shaw (Safety), Grover White, Christopher Zahara, Barry Spratt, and Michael Hall (Fire Department), Kristena Quezada (Industrial Arts), Judith Everett (CPAC), Michael Anderson (Security), and SFC Matthews (48th CSH) for making this a successful team accomplishment.

Additional fire department personnel who supported this effort on June 8 were David Masoner, Greg Tavalero and Gregory Lompa.

The Union's Position: AFGE, Local 1808

On June 16th, Major General Thompson held a Town Hall meeting for all TACOM Installations. There were many items discussed; however, two important items that will affect you as DoD employees were **BRAC 05** and the implementation of the **National Security Personnel System**.

BRAC 05

Major General Thompson wanted to make one thing clear at this time: **THERE IS NO OFFICIAL BRAC LIST OUT.** The lists you might come across are not official and they are just opinions and speculation. A timeline on the BRAC process has been published and it is as follows: (1) Official list will be released by the Secretary of Defense on May 16, 2005; (2) BRAC Commission sends recommended list to the President on Sept. 8, 2005; (3) On Sept. 23, 2005 the President approves or disapproves Commission recommendations; if dis-



Jim Swistowicz, President approved, (4) Commission submits revised recommendations by Oct. 20, 2005; and finally (5) President approves or disapproves revised recommendations by Nov. 7, 2005.

As more information is received by the depot, I will attempt to keep you informed.

NSPS

Major General Thompson's next topic provided some insight about the new National Security Personnel System. He also stated that TACOM would like to participate in the pilot program.

The design process of the NSPS will include a number of features. There will be a series of Focus Groups across all Components of DoD to obtain input from a broad cross section of the workforce. Complete details about the Focus Groups will be formally announced in July. They will generally be held within Component Commands and in large populated areas of DoD civilians.

Rock Island Arsenal will be a Focus Group.

Recent & Near Term Actions

DoD & OPM met with National Unions on Jun. 7, 2004

Conduct focus group sessions: June - July 2004

Pilot group selection: July - August 2004

Draft NSPS regulations projected to be released Nov. - Dec. 2004

1st phase of implementation (pilot groups) to begin no earlier than mid-FY05

If you would like more information on the NSPS the Web site is www.cpms.osd.mil/msps

Col. Plemmons is scheduled to attend the Union's July 6th meeting for a Question and Answer forum from the work force. This meeting is open for all to attend. The meeting will begin at 5:15 pm in Bldg. 58.

Have an enjoyable July 4th weekend, but remember to stay safe at all times.

The Challenge

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LEAN Initiative Assigned Events - VSA and RIE

By Allen Jones
LEAN Office

Higher headquarters establishes lean implementation requirements, known as N divided by 10. This directs the number of teams per year, based on installation population. With Sierra Army Depot's current population, this equals 5 teams per month (currently we average 1.4 teams per month). To meet this requirement, Sierra Army Depot will need to hold 3-4 events per month, with, in some cases, multiple teams per event. There are two different types of events that an employee may be assigned to: Value Stream Analysis (VSA) or Rapid Improvement Event (RIE).

VSA

The main purpose of the VSA is to identify how a process is currently accomplished in its entirety, determine

regulatory/customer driven requirements, boundaries and problem areas within that process. In short, it is to establish an incremental plan of attack to process improvement.

The need to determine the entire process is essential. Normally, a process will cross many different organizational boundaries. Without a clear understanding of each organization's part in a process, changes or problems in one part of the process can adversely impact the process as a whole. By looking at the entire process and understanding every part of that process, problem areas are not only identified, but can be more effectively addressed, without causing additional problem areas due to changes made.

Regulatory/customer driven requirements and boundaries need to be determined. This helps to establish limits, of what are often identified as problem areas, but that cannot be changed. This will help focus resources on the problems. Once problem areas are identified and limits are established, an Action Plan is developed.

The Action Plan is broken into three categories (Do-Its, RIE's and Projects), projected timelines of completion, and ownership for each issue. Do-Its are "quick fixes", improvements that can be made in a short period of time without the use of an RIE. Projects are more difficult issues that cannot be corrected in a short period of time, but also do not require an RIE.

RIE

The purpose of the RIE is to implement change. Once the problems have been identified and isolated, limitations have been established, and boundaries are determined, the individual part of a process is examined. In other words, the VSA is a view of the whole chain, the RIE is the link in the chain.

During the RIE, the individual part of the process is closely examined and a plan is developed. Once the plan is developed it is implemented and closely monitored to determine effective implementation. It is also used to identify additional issues in the form of another Action Plan. This is the continual process improvement concept that is part of LEAN and required by the ISO 9001 certification.

BRAC Office Continues to Provide Answers for Data Call Questions

By Bill Bahl
BRAC Officer

Base Realignment and Closure or BRAC as we have come to understand the process, is the process that DoD has previously used to reorganize its' installation infrastructure to operate more efficiently and effectively to support its' forces, increasing operational readiness and facilitating new ways of doing business. DoD anticipates that BRAC 2005 will build upon processes used in previous BRAC efforts.

We are presently into our third BRAC data call. The second BRAC data call has come and gone with only a few requests for clarification. This is largely due to the professionalism of our functional proponents that are answering the questions here at Sierra Army Depot (SIAD) with the high degree of exactitude and attention to detail. We at the BRAC Office would like to say thank you to those functional experts and that it was a job well done. However, the questions will continue.

SIAD has recently received our third data call that includes another fifty-seven BRAC related questions. This set of questions primarily concerns themselves with community and logistical issues. The answers to these questions will be due to higher headquarters in the mid July timeframe. Also, we expect more questions coming to us prior to this round of questions being completed.

There has been an interest in the BRAC Timeline. The timeline for BRAC 2005 is as follows:

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 established the following milestones for the 2005 BRAC round:

- NLT December 31, 2003 - DoD publishes proposed selection criteria for a 30-day comment period.

- NLT February 16, 2004 - DoD publishes final selection criteria.

- March 2004 - Secretary of Defense submits a report to congress with the FY05 budget justification on the following points:

- o a force structure plan, based on an assessment of probable threats to the national security over the next 20 years.

- o the probable end strength levels and military force units needed to meet those threats.

- o the anticipated levels of available funding

- o a comprehensive inventory of military installations worldwide.

- o a description of infrastructure necessary to support the force structure.

- o a discussion of categories of excess capacity.

- o an economic analysis of the effect of realignments and closures to reduce excess infrastructure.

- o Secretary of Defense certification of the need for BRAC, and that annual net savings would result by 2011.

- NLT May 16, 2005 - Secretary of Defense forwards recommendations for realignments and closures to the BRAC commission.

- NLT September 8, 2005 - the commission forwards its report on the Secretary of Defense's recommendations to the President.

- NLT September 23, 2005 - The President will accept or reject the recommendations in their entirety. If accepted, Congress will have 45 legislative days to act on the recommendations.

There is a rumor that seems to keep popping up that infers that Sierra Army Depot is on a "Base Closure list". I would like to reiterate Major General Thompson's message on June 6, 2004, and that is: *"I want to strongly emphasize to you that what you are reading is opinion, not fact. At the present time, there is no BRAC list of any kind - preliminary or final"*. If you do hear a rumor and would like to test the validity of the rumor, please contact the BRAC Office (5353) or the Public Affairs Office (4343).

There has recently been a buzz in the news about the possibility of the Implementation of the BRAC being extended for two years. That has created stirs of excitement within the workforce. The House Armed Services Readiness Subcommittee on May 4, 2004 approved a two-year delay of the next round of military base closings. The measure would prolong the base closure process until April 2007 at the earliest. **However**, the overall consensus is that the 2005 BRAC **will continue** on the above timeline as scheduled.

TACOM has just introduced a BRAC question and Answer Website on the TACOM Intranet. This Website was designed to keep the workforce up to date with the events of the BRAC process and answer frequently asked BRAC related questions. Access to this Website is available to all SIAD employees through the SIAD Intranet.



Photo by Lynn Goddard

During a celebration for the Army's 229th Birthday, pictured clockwise PFC Octavia Bellinger (48th CSH), Lynette Hall (SIAD), and PFC Jason Pereira (399th CSH) share the honors of cutting the birthday cake.



Ms. Judith Everett, front, swears in approximately 31 new employees during an orientation on June 28th.



Sgt. Marnie Sheera, left, 399th during a respiratory check-up. tance to the Health Clinic staff

COMING SOON!

**EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION
DAY**

AUGUST 19, 2004

F



Members from the 399th Combat Support Hospital from Massachuttes stand in front of the Headquarters sign for a group photo after they completed their two-week summer reserve training here at Sierra Army Depot.



Left, Michael Hall, SIAD Fire blood pressure of soon-to-be r



Support Hospital Unit gives instructions to Jerome Azzano, Respiratory Therapist, provided much welcomed assistance two-week summer reserve training.

by
Goddard



ment provides assistance to the Health Clinic by taking the
loyee David Dutton, WG-05, General Support Worker.



Mr. Steve Podhurst (left), Director of Public Works presents a retirement certificate along with a flag to Ms. Sharon Steele, Office Automation Clerk, Engineering, Plans and Services Division.



Ms. Helen Evans, at left, a Paralegal within our Legal Office was recognized for 30 years of continued federal service by Mr. Vince Sabatino.

Timely Submission for Retirement Application

If you are now considering retirement, the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) strongly recommends that you submit your retirement application package to the ABC-C within 90-120 days in advance of your intended retirement date. A timely submission will help ensure a timely first annuity payment from the Office of Personnel Management.

Consequently, a delay in submitting your application package will directly impact the processing of your retirement; this often results in a delay in the receipt of your first annuity payment. ABC-C statistics indicate, for example, that about 75% of the employees who submitted retirement applications within 1-15 days before retirement may encounter a delay in annuity receipt. Provided below are the percentages of those applications that were processed timely based on the amount of advance receipt of the retirement application from the employee:

- * Retirement packages received more than 60 days in advance- 98.46%
- * Retirement packages received within 31 - 60 days - 96.74%
- * Retirement packages received within 16 - 30 days - 92.78%
- * Retirement packages received within 1 - 15 days - 24.26%
- * Overall timeliness for May, 2004 was 77.22%.

The above statistics reveal that it is in your best interest to submit your retirement application to the ABC-C within the recommended timeframe. Although there may be situations that prevent an early submission, ABC-C strives for timely application processing and continues to provide service of the highest quality to Department of the Army employees.

To learn more about the retirement process, visit the ABC-C web site at <https://www.abc.army.mil>.

"Antiquated" System Gets New Facelift

By Ken Rish and Allen Vanderville
IT Specialists

Over the course of the past several years, dramatic changes have taken place within the Directorate of Information Management (DOIM). Decisions were made to take Sierra Army Depot's antiquated "local area network" (LAN) from something that entailed massive amounts of copper wiring hanging from every nook and cranny to the latest optical fiber available on the market. Increasing local broadcast and connection speeds for the typical end user connection in the process. For those of us that endured the labor-intensive process of re-routing wiring, moving conduits and electrical connections into new locations, the process seemed to never end, not to mention the considerable amount of training required to install and maintaining the equipment. The most difficult part of the transformation was the task of maintaining daily operations for our mission and depot support personnel without incurring any downtime for them.

Initially, the process began with installation of optical fiber being buried throughout the depot infrastructure and terminating in a central location within our communications building. Once the optical fiber was properly located, connections could be made to "new state-of-the-art" rack mounted servers in lieu of the older converted workstations (sitting on desks, floors and grey warehouse shelving) that served as the central data processing center.

Gradually and continually we upgraded each of the older servers with rack-mounted replacements that operate at much higher speeds and contain massive storage capacity. The new technology allows the faster more capable pieces of equipment to occupy far less space than the older units did.

The new DOIM server control console looks like something from the command center of "Star Trek" instead of what looked like the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Today over 40 servers can be accessed and managed from one central console with only four monitors, a keyboard and a mouse. To compliment the console and rack mounted servers, upgraded routers, switches and firewalls have been installed to protect and process the digital information that Sierra utilizes.

The new equipment that DOIM purchased and installed would be worthless without cutting-edge software applications to create and manage the data stored on them. With the agreement of Sierra's command group the latest versions of software needed to enhance this upgrade was acquired and installed.

A significant part of what has happened in the last year hasn't just been in the back room of the building, many of you have had your workstation replaced or upgraded to take advantage of the newer technology. Soon you will see additional changes and advancements brought about by new Army regulations and guidance. Part of the guidance is that the Army mandated that a standard computer system and design be implemented. All workstations in the field will shortly be converted to Microsoft XP Pro with Office 2003.

Although we realize that everyone would like a new computer, a plan has been formulated to purchase workstation replacements for all divisions as time and budget restraints allow. We want to thank each of you for your patience and understanding while all of this is accomplished.

We live in a world that is changing at an extremely fast pace. In order for us to compete in this environment, continuing to upgrade and make changes will become part of our everyday life. DOIM is here to support our customers, who eventually support the Soldier in the field. Each of us here strives to do our best to accomplish that goal, as we know that each of you strive to accomplish yours.

Arrivals and Departures

Sierra Army Depot has hired many employees since the first of 2004 and we would like to welcome them at this time. In the same note, the depot saw many employees retire, transfer, or just move on to greener pastures during this same timeframe. We wish you individuals good luck on your new endeavors.

New Employees

Ausmus, Benjamin; Bailey, Roger; Beland, Sherry; Bomer, Michael; Boulanger, Robert; Brown, James; Burroughs, Ira; Calvert, Jamie; Cartier, John; Chandler, Freddie; Child, Nancy; Clark, Jesse; Collazo, Wendy; Costello, Mary-Katherine; Davis, Curtis; Dickman, Dana; DiMaggio, Alan; Edward, Maria; Emery, Steven; Emmot, Jason; Ford, Roy; Ganson, Elsie; Gee Jr, Robert; Gervacio, Leonardo; Goss, James; Guerrero, Andre; Harris, Donald; Heckenliable, Billie; Heckenliable, Evan; Heisey, Parker; Honea, Jeffrey; Hranac, Victor; Idzinski, Robert; Jacobs, Tammy; Kirker, Marguerite; Lawrence, Jayne; Lopez, Leo; Ludwig, Kenneth; Luntrom, Arlis; Mason, Mary; McDaniel, Michael; Meurer Jr, Roger; Micone, Timothy; Murphy, Daniel; Musnicki, Waylon; Nacion, Puanani; Nass, David; Palmer, Mitchel; Palmer, Ricky; Pfeiffer, Bruce; Podhurst, Steven; Pope, Dennis; Pryor, Michael; Rebentisch, James; Richards, Joseph; Rode, Scott; Rowland, Jr, Thomas; Rullan, Nestor; Ryan, Michael; Sanders, Clifford; Scarpa, Donald; Schwab, Jeffery; Sheets, Chris; Shephard, Mark; Shipley, Stephen; Sibley, Alexander; Sweet, Michael; Tong, Charles; Traudt, Judith; Trone, Sherie; Tschirhart, Kimberly; Tucker, Henry; Watts, Robert; West, Deborah; Wilson, John; Worick, John; Young, Keith.

Previous Co-Workers

Adams, Timothy; Auld, Kenneth; Austin, Eva Lee; Babb, Minnie M; Blevins, Gerry; Brown, James; Burton, Carrolle; Collazo, Wendy; Collins, Harold; Cowan, Teri; Dunn, Michael D; Emmot, Jason; Foster, Robert; Ganson, Elsie; Goss, James; Hayes, Annita; Hill, Dianna; Jacobs, Tammy; Johnston, Sean; Knaup, John; Knox, Jake; Lee, JR, Howard; Lopez, Leo; Marquard, Christopher; Maynor, Caroline; McDowell, Scott; Nelson, Holly; O'Brien, Michael; Palmer, Joyce; Phillips, Jimmy; Prado, Maria; Purrell, James; Reed, Eva; Robinson, Billie; Rosas, Daniel; Sanders, Clifford; Scott, James; Shipley, Stephen; Siegfried, Windy; Sorrick, Linda; Usher, James; Vesterby, Kelly; Vorpahl, Terry; Whatley, Manuel; Wilson, John.



Employees from the Directorate of Information, IT Branch take time out for a group photo. Bottom row left to right Linda Pass, Paula Taylor, Mike Swift, and Linda Cady. Middle row left to right Bill Beddingfield, Ken Rish, Darin Dabell, and Allen Vanderville. Back row left to right Jeremy Day and Roger Meurer.

CYS Enjoy a Variety of Summer Fun Filled Activities

Child and Youth Services (CYS) have been celebrating this summer with fun activities and exciting trips, but it's not over yet, there's still lots more fun to come! During the month of July we'll be taking a Rafting trip, going to Lake Tahoe, and to Six Flags Amusement Park. Then during the month of August it's off to Wild Island and then Eagle Lake where the whole family is welcome. For more info on signing up to become a member or interested in going on a trip please call 530-827-4696.

SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER



Lanaya Chapman

CYS summer hours: SAS – Mon-Thurs 6 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

YS- (Middle School) Mon-Thurs 1 p.m.-5 p.m.; Fri. 2 p.m.-5 p.m.; Sat 1 p.m.- 5 p.m.

(Teens) Mon-Thurs 1 p.m.- 7 p.m.; Fri. 2 p.m.-9 p.m.; Sat 1 p.m.-9 p.m.

Congratulations! Jennifer Fuller for being Spot Light Employee of the Month! You do a great job at CYS and we appreciate all your hard work and dedication. You're a major team player, hard worker, and you do it all

with a smile. You are always willing to help out or take the initiative and start something new. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you Jennifer for a job well done!

CYS would also like to introduce Lanaya Chapman, our new School Liaison Officer. Lanaya has worked for Fort Sage Unified School District. She attended college at Chico State University and graduated with a degree in Recreation Administration. She is now working on getting her teaching credentials. Lanaya, welcome to our team!

SPOT LIGHT EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Jennifer Fuller

Thrift Investment Board Announces Toll-Free Telephone Service

Washington, D.C. (June 16, 2004) – The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board announced today that it will begin providing toll-free telephone service to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) participants and beneficiaries beginning July 1, 2004. Those using the toll-free service will be able to obtain TSP account or transaction information via the ThriftLine's automated telephone service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They will also be able to speak to a participant service representative at one of two TSP call centers between the expanded hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

One TSP call center has been operated by the National Finance Center of the U.S. Department of Agriculture since the Plan began operating in 1987. In March of this year, the TSP announced the selection of Spherix Inc. to operate a parallel TSP call center. The two call centers are located in different geographical areas. They will complement each other during normal operations and "back-up" each other during weather-related or other local events which could otherwise interrupt service.

The TSP is a retirement savings plan for Federal employees; it is similar to the 401(k) plans offered by many

private employers. As of May 31, 2004, TSP assets totaled more than \$135 billion, and retirement savings accounts were being maintained for nearly 3.3 million TSP participants. Participants include Federal civilian employees in all branches of Government, employees of the U.S. Postal Service, and members of the uniformed services.

In announcing the new toll-free service enhancement, Executive Director Gary A. Amelio explained that it will be obtained at a reasonable cost. "Because the TSP receives no annual appropriations from Congress and administrative expenses are borne exclusively by participants, we wanted to be certain that the service was affordable. The Call traffic switching capacity associated with the establishment of our parallel call center gave us a new opportunity to investigate this enhanced service," according to Amelio. "When we did, we found that we could offer it for just pennies per minute." The new switching capacity also provides enhanced disaster recovery capability.

Although some Federal agencies have permitted employees or their Human Resource offices to use agency telephones to make inquiries regarding TSP accounts, this was not universal. Additionally, although the TSP Web site

provides a "toll-free" alternative for most TSP information and transactions, it does not provide access to participant service representatives. "It has troubled me that some employees and retirees have been underserved, and I am delighted that we are now able to remedy this situation," Amelio stated.

In making the announcement, Amelio particularly noted the contribution of the Employee Thrift Advisory Council organizations which include the unions and associations representing Federal and Postal employees and retirees. "My earliest discussions with Council members when I arrived a year ago included the issue of toll-free telephone service. While these organizations agreed with the need to keep Plan costs low, they continued to apprise me of their member's interest in toll-free service. Thus, when the opportunity arose to obtain the service cost-effectively, we were very receptive," Amelio stated.

Beginning July 1, 2004, for calls from the U.S., Canada, or Virgin Islands, primary toll-free number will be 1-TSP-YOU-FRST (1-877-968-3778) and the TDD number for the hearing impaired is 1-TSP-THRIFT5 (1-877-847-4385). The current number (1-504-255-8777) should be used for all other international calls.

MWR Services

Skedaddle Inn/Conference Center

Skedaddle Inn Conference Center Lounge is open Thursday, 5 p.m. till the last customer leaves. The Skedaddle Inn Conference Center is equipped to cater large or small events.

Call the manager at 4360 or email Raul.Granados@sierra.army.mil
Hours: M-F, 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sierra Lodge/Guest House

Call the lodging manager, 4544, or Raul.Granados@sierra.army.mil for information

Sierra Bowling Center and Snack Bar

Open everyday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Call 4442 for information. Check out the Lunch Specials Monday through Thursday. Delivery available on all orders received before 10:45 a.m.. Contact Jackie Weston-Chase to book your birthday packages and holiday parties. Dates fill up quick so plan early.

Physical Fitness Center

Open Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday open from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The only charge to individuals is \$3 (per hour) for use of the Racquetball Court.

ITR is available at the Physical Fitness Center. For more information call 4655 or email ok.fern@sierra.army.mil

Outdoor Recreation and Equipment Rental

For reservations and information call Chris Long at 4354.

Laundromat

Open daily, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in building 142. Cost for wash \$1.25 and .25 cents for (15 minute drying). For your convenience, there is a machine with laundry supplies located inside the facility and also a change machine.

Recycling Center

Open Monday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call 4504 for more information.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation

Administrative Assistant can be reached at 4797, Mon.-Thurs. from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email her at regina.stauffer@sierra.army.mil The business Office can be reached at 4178 or 4609.

Safety Tips for a Safe and Fun Fourth of July

By Steve Emery
Fire Inspector

People everywhere are fascinated by fireworks — by the mystery and splendor that light the night sky or turn a backyard into a festival of light and sound. Like nothing else, fireworks can excite, thrill and amaze us. But as dazzling as fireworks can be, they can also be harmful if used improperly.

The National Council on Fireworks Safety (NCFS) urges you to put safety first when celebrating this Fourth of July. Legal fireworks are safer than ever, in part because of stringent federal safety standards enacted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1976. The incidence of fireworks-related injuries has dropped dramatically during the past 10 years, but can be cut further by following a few simple guidelines.

“Only use legal fireworks,” The key, of course, is being able to recognize what’s legal and what’s not. Legal

fireworks conform to the standards. Illegal ones often don’t.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission requires that legal fireworks show the name of the item, the name of the manufacturer or distributor and easy-to-read cautionary labeling and instructions for proper use.

“Commonly used fireworks include cones, fountains, and sparklers,” Before setting off any fireworks, contact your local police or fire department to make sure fireworks are allowed in your area. “California Laws are different from Nevada Laws.”

Illegal devices include M80s, M100s and silver salutes. They have been federally banned since 1966 because of the large amounts of illegal explosives they contain. “Don’t confuse these items with legal, consumer fireworks. Illegal devices will usually be

unlabeled, will not bear a caution statement and will not list the manufacturer’s name,” Illegal explosive devices are extremely dangerous and can cause serious injuries. If you find any illegal items, or know of anyone selling them, contact the police immediately.

If you choose to use consumer fireworks to celebrate this year’s Fourth of July festivities, remember the following safety tips on Fireworks Safety:

- A responsible adult should supervise all fireworks activities.
- Never give fireworks to young children.
- Always purchase fireworks from reliable sources.
- Follow label directions carefully.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from buildings/vehicles.

- Never carry fireworks in your pocket or shoot them in metal or glass containers.

- Light them one at a time then move back quickly.

- Don’t experiment with homemade fireworks.

- Observe local laws and use common sense.

- Sparklers, fountains and other items that many states allow for use by consumers are not appropriate when a large crowd is present.

- If attending a community display, leave your own fireworks at home — there will be plenty of excitement provided by the display.

Take this opportunity to enjoy some time away from work with family and friends. “Have a Safe and Sane 4th of July” from the members of the Sierra Army Depot Fire Department.



Sierra Plays and Integral Role in the Medical Reengineering Initiative

By Cindy Garza
Business Development Office

So, why are all the Medical Soldiers at Sierra Army Depot? They’re here in support of the Army Medical Department’s (AMEDD) Medical Reengineering Initiative (MRI).

The MRI is the AMEDD’s latest force design update that serves as the interim force and bridge to the future force. It basically converts all Army hospitals to the same configuration. Currently there are three types of hospital, Combat Support Hospitals, General Hospitals and Field Hospitals, all different depending on their authorizations.

The technical term for MRI is “MRI reorganizes our deployable medical force at the Corps and Echelon above Corps. This force will provide full spectrum Combat Health Support versatility to the Army while operating as an integral part of the joint force supporting interagency operations. MRI supports the Interim Force and provides a bridge for supporting the Army’s Objective Force.”

Sierra Army Depot’s roll in the MRI is critical to the success of the program. We will spend 5 years converting hospitals to the MRI configuration. We started by receiving and staging Medical Material Sets (MMS) in support of MRI in Jan 04, shortly after that we started deploying MMS’s and non-medical stocks to Units being

converted at home station all over the world. On occasion we deploy two person teams to home station to help with the conversion as well.

So why all the Soldiers at Sierra? As part of the MRI, Sierra will support the conversion of the 32 Reserve Component Hospital Detachments (RCHD) in Long-Term Storage (LTS) at the Depot. This will be a three-year process that will run from Jun-Oct between FY04-FY07. During the summer MRI season the Unit assigned to each hospital will send between 20-30 Soldiers to Sierra to provide labor for the conversions. All Units are Reserves on their two-week summer training and explains

why we are only converting RCHD’s during the summer. All other months we will be shipping and receiving assets from home stations.

The MRI conversion requires a team of about 100 people that includes members from the United States Medical Material Agency, Eagle Systems, Sierra Army Depot, Reserve Units, and Reserve Training Centers. The team converges onto a hospital and within 2-3 weeks will convert it to the new MRI configuration. Not an easy task to say the least.

An average RCHD consists of 68 each 20’ MILVANS of equipment. We are to inventory the medical supplies,

perform a Medical Maintenance cycle, pull excess assets no longer authorized in the hospital, add new equipment that is authorized, build Clinically Operational Equipment Sets (COES) packages (defined later in the letter), add Minimal Care Detachments (MCD) (defined later in the letter) and just about everything else you can imagine. We are to ship Unit assets to their home station and receive from home station what will go into the hospitals at Sierra (and I’m talking hundreds of trucks of assets). When the MRI is completed (in FY08) we will have handled approx 2,556,000 pieces of medical supplies at Sierra Army Depot alone.



Members of the 48th Combat Support Hospital Unit from Ft. Meade, Maryland came to Sierra Army Depot to accomplish their two-week reserve summer training. Pictured at left members from the unit endure the heat while removing test supplies and equipment from containers in order to inspect, inventory and resupply their hospital to be ready for redeployment when needed.



